

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 SAIGON 14122 01 OF 02 110635Z

15

ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-05 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 AID-05 OMB-01 /059 W
----- 058488

R 110508Z NOV 74

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 193

INFO CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

USDEL JEC PARIS

AMCONSUL CAN THO

AMCONSUL DANANG

AMCONSUL NHA TRANG

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 SAIGON 14122

FOLLOWING MSGE SENT ACTION SAIGON 8 NOV 74 BEING REPEATED TO YOU

QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BIEN HOA 578

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, VS

SUBJECT: DEVELOPMENTS IN DISPUTE AT CHINH TAM III IN BINH TUY
PROVINCE

REF: A. BIEN HOA 569; B. SAIGON 13881

SUMMARY: FOLLOWING CONFRONTATION NOVEMBER 2 REPORTED REF A
A GROUP OF CATHOLIC PRIESTS IN BINH TUY PROVINCE CONSTITUED
THEMSELVES A KIND OF ARBITRATION PANEL AND NEGOTIATED WITH
PROVINCE CHIEF FOR RESOLUTION OF THE PROBLEM WHICH APPEARS
TO BE IN TRAIN. ATMOSPHERE IN THE AREA IS UNDERSTOOD TO BE IMPROVING
BUT STILL CHARGED. THE GROUP OF CATHOLIC PRIESTS ARE REPORTED
TO HAVE AGREED AND DECLARED IN WRITING THAT THE PROBLEM AT THE
HAMLET INVOLVES A LAND DISPUTE RATHER THAN ANY POLITICAL ISSUE AND
TO HAVE RECOGNIZED, ALSO IN WRITING, THAT THE HAMLET LEADER WHO
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 SAIGON 14122 01 OF 02 110635Z

HAS PAST HISTORY OF ODD COMPORTMENT IMPROPERLY TOOK MATTERS INTO

HIS OWN HANDS IN THIS INSTANCE.
END SUMMARY.

1. NEW INFORMATION SINCE REF A WAS SENT IS THAT THE DISTRICT CHIEF CONCERNED WHO LED THE POLICE AT THE TIME OF THE NOVEMBER 2 MELEE IS A DEVOUT CATHOLIC AND A NEPHEW OF THE ARCHBISHOP OF SAIGON. IT IS WIDELY AGREED THAT HE WOULD NOT HAVE ORDERED OR TOLERATED POLICE SHOOTING OR OTHER ABUSES AGAINST THE PEOPLE OF THIS CATHOLIC HAMLET. WE ARE ALSO TOLD THAT HE HAS OBTAINED LETTERS FROM THE ARCHBISHOPS OF SAIGON AND OF NHA TRANG DECLARING THAT THE PROBLEM AT THE HAMLET HAS NEW INVOLVED ANY POLICE ATTEMPT TO SUPPRESS THE ANTI-CORRUPTION MOVEMENT.

2. IN A MEETING NOVEMBER 7 WITH OUR PROV REP AT THE DISTRICT TOWN, HOAI DUC, SOME 7 KMS NORTH OF CHINH TAM III, THE PROVINCE CHIEF DESCRIBED NEGOTIATIONS IN THE HOAI DUC CHURCH THE PREVIOUS NIGHT CONTINUING UNTIL 4:00 A.M. WITH A GROUP OF CATHOLIC PRIESTS FROM BINH TUY PROVINCE WHO HAD CONSTITUTED THEMSELVES A SORT OF ARBITRATION PANEL TO SEEK AN AMICABLE RESOLUTION OF THE CHINH TAM III PROBLEM. THE LEADER OF THE PRIESTS WAS ONE FATHER DINH WHO IS THE PRINCIPAL RECTOR IN THE CHINH TAM I, II, AND III HAMLETS. OTHERS WERE A FATHER FROM THE NEARBY VILLAGE OF TANH LINH; THE PRINCIPAL RECTOR OF THE PROVINCE, FATHER HOA; AND THREE OTHERS. WE WERE TOLD THAT A REPRESENTATIVE OF SENATOR LUONG WAS ALSO PRESENT.

3. THE PROVINCE CHIEF TOLD OUR PROV REP THAT THE PRIESTS BROUGHT THE FOLLOWING DEMANDS FROM BROTHER DUC AT CHINH TAM III: ADDITIONAL LAND ADJACENT TO THE HAMLET WHICH IS URGENTLY REQUIRED FOR A CEMETERY; \$VN 500,000 FUNERAL EXPENSES FOR THE FAMILY OF THE DECEASED 17-YEAR OLD BOY; \$VN 500,000 EACH FOR AN ADDITIONAL FIVE OR SIX VILLAGERS SAID TO HAVE SUFFERED INJURIES FROM POLICE BEATING; RELEASE OF THE TWO VILLAGERS TAKEN INTO CUSTODY BY THE POLICE AT THE TIME OF THE NOVEMBER 2 MELEE; RELEASE OF THE THREE DRAFT EVADERS TAKEN FROM THE HAMLET AT THAT TIME; A POLICE APOLOGY AND ADMISSION THAT THEY HAD BROKEN A STATUE OF THE VIRGIN MARY, TOGETHER WITH COMPENSATION; AND COMPENSATION FOR A BURNED HOUSE IN THE HAMLET. THE PROVINCE CHIEF SAID THAT AFTER NEGOTIATING ALL NIGHT THE PRIESTS HAD AGREED TO TAKE THE FOLLOWING MAXIMUM OFFERS OF THE PROVINCE CHIEF TO BROTHER DUC AT CHINH TAM III: THE PROVINCE CHIEF WOULD PROVIDE SOME LAND NEAR CHINH TAM III FOR A CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 SAIGON 14122 01 OF 02 110635Z

CEMETERY (NOT NECESSARILY THE SUGAR CANE LAND PREVIOUSLY DEMANDED BY THE VILLAGERS FOR WHICH A NON-VILLAGE OWNER CURRENTLY HAS LEGAL TITLE); \$VN 300,000 FUNERAL EXPENSES FOR THE FAMILY OF THE DECEASED BOY; AND RELEASE OF THE TWO VILLAGERS TAKEN INTO CUSTODY. THE PROVINCE CHIEF WOULD NOT AGREE TO COMPENSATE VILLAGERS SAID TO HAVE BEEN BEATEN BECAUSE HE DID NOT HAVE THE FUNDS AND COULD NOT IN ANY EVENT ACCEPT THAT POLICE HAD BEATEN THEM. HE FLATLY REFUSED TO RELEASE THE DRAFT EVADERS. HE WOULD NOT AGREE TO ACCEPT ANY GVN

RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE BROKEN STATUE AND WOULD NOT OFFER COMPENSATION (THERE ARE SAID TO BE WITNESSES THAT THE STATUE WAS IN FACT THROWN BY VILLAGERS AT THE POLICE DURING THE NOVEMBER 2 CONFRONTATION, AND THE NEGOTIATING FATHERS WERE SAID TO HAVE ACCEPTED IN ANY EVENT THAT THE STATUE COULD EASILY HAVE BEEN BROKEN FROM PUSHING AND SHOVING). THE PROVINCE CHIEF REFUSED TO OFFER COMPENSATION FOR THE BURNED HOUSE. HE OBSERVED PRIVATELY TO OUR PROV REP THAT THE STRUCTURE WAS A SHED RATHER THAN A HOUSE AND THAT HE HAD POSITIVE PROFF THAT VILLAGERS HAD BURNED IT AFTER THE CONFRONTATION.

4. THE PROVINCE CHIEF SAID THAT THE PRIESTS HAD JOINED HIM IN SIGNING THE ABOVE PROPOSED "AGREEMENT" AND HAD ADDITIONALLY SIGNED A STATEMENT ALONG THESE LINES: THEY DID NOT BELIEVE THAT GVN OFFICERS INITIATED ACTION ON NOVEMBER 2 AT CHINH TAM III TO SUPPRESS A POLITICAL DEMONSTRATION; IN SETTING UP ROADBLOCKS ON ROUTE 333 AND IN CUTTING A SUGAR CANE FIELD, BROTHER DUC HAD BEEN TAKING MATTERS INTO HIS OWN HANDS OUTSIDE PROPER PROCEDURES AND WAS FURTHER RECOGNIZED TO HAVE BEEN CAUSING TROUBLE FOR SEVERAL MONTHS PRIOR TO THE INCIDENT.

5. THE PRIESTS TOOK THE PROPOSED AGREEMENT TO CHINH TAM III ON THE MORNING OF NOVEMBER 7 AND NEGOTIATED WITH BROTHER DUC AND THE VILLAGERS UNTIL LATE THAT AFTERNOON. THE PROVINCE CHIEF STOOD BY IN HOAI DUC. OUR PROV REP REMAINED UNTIL LATE IN THE AFTERNOON AND UP UNTIL THE TIME OF HIS DEPARTURE THERE WAS ENCOURAGING WORD REGARDING THE NEGOTIATION OF THE PRIESTS WITH BROTHER DUC BUT NO ACCEPTANCE. WE WERE SUBSEQUENTLY INFORMED, HOWEVER, THAT BY THE END OF THE DAY THE PRIESTS HAD SECURED THE AGREEMENT OF BROTHER DUC AND THE PROVINCE CHIEF RETURNED TO THE PROVINCIAL CAPITAL AT HAM TAN. OUR LATEST WORD IS THAT THE DEPUTY PROVINCE CHIEF WAS TO VISIT CHINH TAM III TOGETHER WITH THE PRIESTS TO SECURE FINAL COMMITMENT OF THE VILLAGERS TO THE AGREEMENT.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 SAIGON 14122 01 OF 02 110635Z

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 SAIGON 14122 02 OF 02 110624Z

15

ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-05 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 AID-05 OMB-01 /059 W

----- 058450

R 110508Z NOV 74

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 194

INFO CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

USDEL JEC PARIS

AMCONSUL CAN THO

AMCONSUL DANANG

AMCONSUL NHA TRANG

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 SAIGON 14122

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 BIEN HOA 578

6. THE PROVINCE CHIEF TOLD OUR PROV REP NOVEMBER 7 THAT HIS FIRST DUTY IS TO TRY TO STABILIZE THE SITUATION IN THE CHINH TAM AREA WHERE THE ATMOSPHERE REMAINS CHARGED THOUGH IMPROVING. WHEN THINGS ARE QUIETER, HE SAID, HE INTENDS TO PROSECUTE PEOPLE INVOLVED IN EXCESSIVE WRONG-DOING. HE DECLARED IN THIS REGARD THAT HE HAS POSITIVE PROVE THAT THE 17-YEAR OLD DECEASED BOY HAD DIED THREE DAYS BEFORE THE INCIDENT AND THAT HIS BODY HAD BEEN EXHUMED AND ADMINISTERED A HEAD BLOW BEFORE THE BODY WAS PRODUCED AS EVIDENCE OF POLICE BRUTALITY. HE SAID HE ALSO HAD NAMES OF THOSE WHO HAD BURNED THE SHED IN THE HAMLET AND WOULD PROBABLY PROSECUTE THEM.

7. THE PROV REP ALSO REPORTED SEVERAL OF THE PRIESTS AS HAVING SAID THAT THEY KNEW BROTHER DUC TO HAVE A HISTORY OF DISSIDENT BEHAVIOR WHEN HE WAS A NOVITIATE IN A PARISH IN BINH THUAN PROVINCE. HIS SUPERVISING PRIEST IN THE BINH THUAN PARISH HAD FOREWARNED THE CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 SAIGON 14122 02 OF 02 110624Z

PRINCIPAL RECTOR IN THE CHINH TAM AREA THAT HE WAS HIGH STRUNG, NERVOUS, AND HAD A HISTORY OF DIFFICULTIES IN BINH THUAN PROVINCE. THE CHINH TAM RECTOR DECIDED TO ACCEPT HIM ANYWAY.

8. BEYOND THE RECENT CONFRONTATION AND ITS AFTERMATH, THE FUNDAMENTAL PROBLEM INVOLVES LAND WHICH WAS OWNED BY CHINH TAM III HAMLET FAMILIES BEFORE THEY WERE EVACUATED NINE TO TEN YEARS AGO BECAUSE OF VC PRESENCE IN THE AREA. ABOUT 1972, WHEN A CONSIDERABLE MEASURE OF PACIFICATION HAD BEEN BROUGHT TO THIS AREA, ABSENTEE

ENTERPRISERS BEGAN TO CULTIVATE SOME OF THE LANDS IN THE AREA. IT APPEARS THAT JUST BEFORE CHINH TAM III WAS RE-OCCUPIED UNDER THE RETURN-TO-VILLAGE PROGRAM IN THE SPRING OF 1974, THE ABSENTEE CULTIVATORS SUCCEEDED IN GAINING LEGAL TITLE TO THE LANDS. THE PROVINCE CHIEF REPORTS THAT THIS OCCURRED BEFORE HE TOOK OVER FROM HIS PREDECESSOR AND THAT AS MUCH AS HE WOULD LIKE TO RESTORE THE LANDS TO THE VILLAGERS HE HAS NO POWER TO REVOKE LAND TITLES WHICH HAVE BEEN LEGALIZED. IT HAD BEEN HIS DESIRE TO TRY TO RESOLVE THE MATTER IN SOME OTHER WAY THROUGH HIS LAND SERVICES OFFICE BUT THE VILLAGERS HAD REFUSED TO TREAT WITH LAND SERVICE REPRESENTATIVES. WE ARE TOLD THAT DR. DAN IN SAIGON WAS FOREWARNED OF THESE LAND PROBLEMS BEFORE HE APPROVED CHINH TAM III AS A RETURN-TO-VILLAGE SITE BUT HAD SAID THE SITE SHOULD BE ESTABLISHED ANYWAY, APPARENTLY BELIEVING THAT THE VILLAGERS COULD BE COMPENSATED WITH OTHER LANDS IN THE GENERAL AREA.

PETERS
UNQUOTE
MARTIN

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PROVINCE, MEETINGS, LAND REFORMS, POLITICAL SITUATION, RELIGIOUS LEADERS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 11 NOV 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: cunninfx
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974SAIGON14122
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740323-0993
From: SAIGON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19741153/aaaabtic.tel
Line Count: 241
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: A. BIEN HOA 569; B. SAIGON 13881
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: cunninfx
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 01 MAY 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <01 MAY 2002 by rowelle0>; APPROVED <17 MAR 2003 by cunninfx>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: DEVELOPMENTS IN DISPUTE AT CHINH TAM III IN BINH TUY PROVINCE
TAGS: PINT, VS
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005